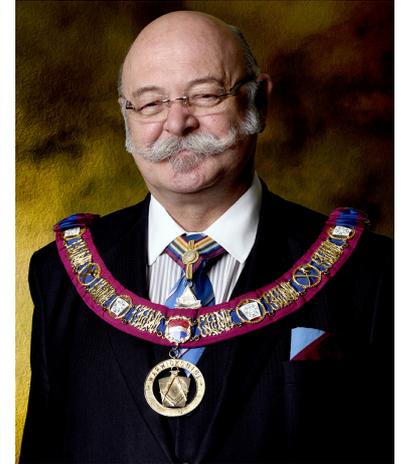




Warwickshire Mark

March 2021

Mark Benevolent Fund Festival to be hosted by Warwickshire in 2027 R.W.Bro P. Wills Provincial Grand Master



Well Brethren, as we move forward in 2021 with light at the end of the tunnel, we must give some consideration to the 2027 Festival. As you may have read the Mark Benevolent Fund are about to re-launch the Festival Stewardship scheme so that each Province will have their own distinct Stewards Jewel when in Festival. News of the Warwickshire 2027 Stewardship will be available following the revision of Rule 176 Book of Constitutions and Regulations (March). The benefits have been somewhat enhanced in that the minimum £100.00 Stewardship fee will be subject (where applicable) to gift aid and the whole amount will also be allocated to each individual and accounted towards their MBF Honorific. Therefore, if any Brother is not at present in possession of an MBF Jewel, they will automatically receive Life Governorship and of course the appropriate Jewel.

Brethren, it is rare for Charity Festivals to clash within the same Province and I am fully aware that we must support our Provincial Grand Master in the Craft with the 2023 Festival. However, we must also be mindful of our commitment to the MBF Festival to be hosted by Warwickshire in 2027. I would ask therefore that if you have not already committed to a regular giving agreement that you perhaps could give it your serious consideration. I must reiterate however that there are no set targets for either Lodges or Individual, keeping in mind the words... 'Whatever you feel disposed to give'.

I have set out below the Honorifics table along with examples of regular giving achievements.

Patronage Award	Brethren	Ladies
Life Governor	£100	
Vice-Patron	£250	£125
Patron	£500	£250
Grand Patron	£1000	£500
Grand Patron Gold	£2500	£1250
Grand Patron Diamond	£5000	£2500

Based on the assumption that the first payment will be in March 2021 (75 months)

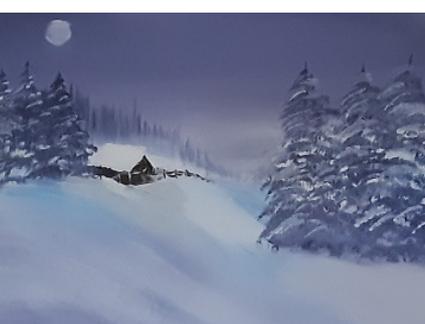
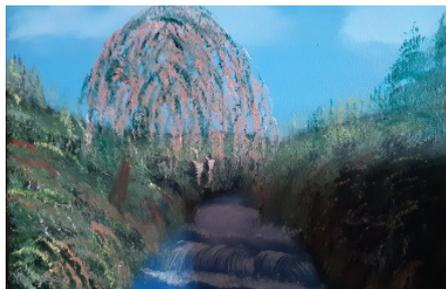
Life Governor (£100) is	£1.33 a month (£1.07 if gift aided)
Vice Patron (£250) is	£3.33 a month (£2.67 if gift aided)
Patron (£500) is	£6.67 a month (£5.33 if gift aided)
Grand Patron (£1000) is	£13.33 a month (£10.67 if gift aided)
Grand Patron Gold (£2500) is	£33.33 a month (£26.67 if gift aided)
Grand Patron Diamond (£5000) is	£66.67 a month (£53.33 if gift aided)



What have you been up to during lockdown? - from the Provincial Grand Master

Brethren, many years ago, or so it seems, I recall watching a TV programme called, 'The Joy of Painting with Bob Ross', and I was amazed what he was able to produce in oils, with no more than a two inch brush, a fan brush and a pallet knife. Yes Brethren, I made the classic mistake of mentioning to my dear wife that I would like to 'have a go at that one day'; in no time flat she furnished me with canvas, paint and brushes. Needless to say, that they sat gathering dust for a long, long time.

Fast forward to lockdown and coincidentally, a re-run of the Joy of Painting Series; the easel, canvases, paints and brushes were dusted down (a lot of dust) and I decided to at last 'have a go' and it was off to the shed I went, with some pleasing results...well, I thought so. Having shared the results with a couple of people, I have now been coerced into sharing some of the results of my labours with you in the hope that we can encourage you to perhaps share your experiences of lockdown with us.



So, what have you been doing?

What have you been up to during lockdown 2 - from the Assistant Provincial Grand Master

So what is your 'Covid Craze'? Quizzes on a Saturday, disco dancing workouts in the kitchen or endless Zoom Meetings?

Well amongst some in my village there has been a different 'Covid Craze'; Model Railways or more particularly building them. Michael 'choo choo' Portillo and Chris 'who wants to be a millionaire' Tarrant might be making a good living in second careers involved with trains but the modellers of Birdingbury are enjoying their locomotives simply for fun.

I think my love of trains started as a small boy holding the hand of my great aunt who would take me for a walk and let me stand on a bridge waving at passengers making their way up and down the West Coast Mainline to and from London. One of my most vivid memories, some would say a nightmare, is watching condemned steam locomotives being towed north to the fateful end created by the cutters touch.

Continued:

With that passion well engrained I was very fortunate to have a brilliant Godfather who was kind enough to give up one of his bedrooms and build a model railway for me. The most important locomotive was, of course, Flying Scotsman. Mine had a flickering firebox, great when the lights were switched off. As with almost all things ambition reigned and that layout was not deemed large enough and a new one was built in a larger bedroom with a significant viaduct.

So, for as many years as I can remember I have been intending to build my own model railway and some fifteen years ago the building of a new shed allowed me to make a start with a simple layout. Though rudimentary it provided motivation to start buying a few things on ebay, but a desire to use the shed for alternative purposes meant that everything had to be packed away in a variety of boxes. Would all this stuff ever see the light of day again?

The autumn of 2019 began with renewed vigour and a decision was made to reconfigure how we use our various sheds, or shall we call them outbuildings as Knight Frank might. You may well get an impression that we have a few sheds and indeed we have. If I love trains then I would have to accept that I have an obsession with sheds. Unfortunately it was found that the assigned shed, 'Shed no. 2' had a leaking roof, which is not always the best thing to have where electricians are involved. A simple fix of that turned into several weeks' worth of work and Shed No 2 acquired insulation, lining, heating and floor coverings. The final job was to set up the baseboards for the track with shelves for boxes and the stage was set; though the carpenter went away with the very clear thoughts that the layout would never be built.

Well, I am pleased to say that Colin was wrong and though there were moments of stress I have a track laid. The lockdown was helpful in giving more time but made getting parts very difficult. Most of the suppliers employ older men (strangely enough) and many businesses closed as they went to shield. The biggest stress this created was the ability to tack down the track with the correct long pins. If suppliers had them in stock they were closed, if they were open, they were out of stock. I lay my track on a foam-based underlay (it makes for smoother running but raises the height of the track) and as I tried to lay it with the pins I could acquire, wrong and small, they left the track looking like the rolling waves of the ocean. As locomotives went over points their leading wheels, known as bogies, would come off the track and the train would derail. I well remember lying in bed awake in the middle of the night questioning whether the whole project was sunk! I thought work was stressful. If I still have your attention well done.

Finally, more hours on the internet found a single pack of long track pins. With £4.50 spent we were back, up and running. Some might say 'on track'.

So now I have a working model railway, based somewhere on the West Coast Mainline from 1962. The locomotives are appropriate for the early 1960's and for those with interest there are three Duchesses, a Princess Royal, a Royal Scot, a Black 5 (with a Rugby shed plate), a rebuilt Patriot, an unrebuilt Patriot; I'll stop there save to say I also have a digitally controlled Class 20 with engine and brake noises together a multitude of horn sounds. Models have moved on a bit since my Flying Scotsman with a flickering firebox.

Notwithstanding the work done so far the layout is far from finished and new ideas are always being hatched in my mind as to how to improve it. We will see how things go.

Commitment to our church, model railways and Mark Masonry; a good combination for lockdown?

Provincial Virtual Burns Night

The Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro Philip Wills invited all brethren in the Province together with family and guests to a virtual Burns Night celebration on Friday January 29th.

This started at 7.30pm after the meetings of the Installed Worshipful Commanders' Lodge of RAM (1400) and the Installed Worshipful Masters' Lodge of RAM (also 1400) .

With W.Bro Howard Smith keeping us all under control, the evening began with a welcome from the Prov.G.M before the haggis was piped in on a video kindly supplied by Paul Burgess who was playing the bagpipes. W. Bro Gordon Ferguson, Fergie, then addressed the Haggis in fine traditional style.

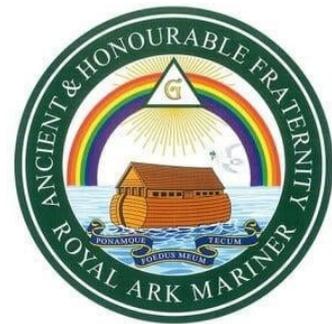
W.Bro John Handley delivered a very interesting illustrated talk on Robert Burns and W.Bro Bill Davies gave us Burns's poem 'To a Mouse' We were then all led by W.Bro Cliff Bull in singing 'Auld Lang Syne'.

After this the event split up into a number of breakout rooms where Brethren and their families enjoyed what is today an all too rare chance to converse with their Mark fellows.

In the end this enjoyable social occasion ended as the Haggis was beginning to get cold, but I hope the whisky was still at room temperature and no-one had been tempted to add ice to a good malt!

The Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariners (R.A.M.) - V.W.Bro Gareth Hughes

The R.A.M. Degree takes its rise from the story of the Flood and Noah's special task, one of the oldest biblical stories. Many aspects of the ceremony have roots in early Freemasonry and continue some of the traditions no longer practiced in Craft. Traces of this Degree can be found in Craft workings going back well over 300 years, and there are some indications that Noah was the original central figure in the Craft. One of the earliest surviving Masonic documents, the Graham Manuscript, dated 24 October 1726, explicitly refers to the sons of Noah seeking the secret which their dead father had possessed in a manner similar to part of the Traditional History of the Third Degree. This manuscript thus gives a Noah story, rather than an Hiramite one as the legend of the Third Degree.



The Degree has been under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England and Wales since 1871 but is known to have been worked in Mark Lodges since 1790. Every Royal Ark Mariner Lodge is 'moored' to a Lodge of Mark Master Masons and bears the same number but not necessarily the same name. Some R.A.M. Lodges meet on the same day as the Mark Lodge to which they are attached and hold a joint Festive Board, others are completely separate. The core messages of the two Degrees beautifully complement each other. There are 17 Royal Ark Mariner lodges in Warwickshire. The oldest was consecrated in 1893, the youngest in 1998.

The Royal Ark Mariner Degree builds on masonic teaching by demonstrating the strength to be found as part of a family or group working together to do the right thing in the face of great adversity. It also makes explicit the meaning of brotherly love and the relief of need and poverty and further develops the idea that is the keynote of initiation: the making of a new beginning or the adoption of a new outlook on life.

Some 57% of Warwickshire Mark Masons are also members of a Royal Ark Mariner lodge - not necessarily the lodge moored to their Mark lodge. Those who are 'elevated' as Royal Ark Mariners, soon realise that it is a beautiful, accessible and directly practical degree.

The degree, above all, celebrates the providence and mercy of God in saving Noah and his family from the destruction meted out to all others. The actions of Noah and the symbol of the Ark are particularly apposite. The Master, referred to as the Commander and representing Noah, speaks of his Wardens as his sons, Japheth and Shem; this might seem a little contrived or quaint, but the exchanges between the three principal officers are appropriately familial and instructive.

The ritual focuses on those attributes and virtues exemplified by Noah, and the symbolic uses of the working tools of the degree, are beautifully and informatively explained. The explanation of the steps taken to move from the West to the East is particularly important in this degree, as are the addresses by the three principal officers to the candidate after he has been entrusted with the traditional secrets. The candidate is clearly and, particularly in this Fraternity, kindly instructed in his obligations to others and to his God.

There is a different feel about this degree which is difficult to explain. The degree is not homily; the symbolism in Ark Masonry is anything but basic. But, there is a very real closeness between the members and the candidate - as one would find on board any ship; indeed the installation of the commander ritualistically stresses this very real bond and the address to the new commander is particularly apt in this regard. Ark Masonry is rightly referred to as a Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariners, rather than merely as a degree.

R.A.M. regalia is relatively simple, but colourful, and there is little concern over rank and title. Holders of Provincial and Grand Rank wear a small collaret, whilst Past Commanders can wear an additional breast jewel. There is no Provincial or District officer structure as such in the Fraternity, as all administration above Lodge level is undertaken by the Mark hierarchy - Mariners are blessed with few titles and little fuss.

The Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England and Wales is automatically Grand Master of the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Royal Ark Mariners, and the degree of Royal Ark Mariner is conferred only upon Mark Master Masons. In 1991 it was decided that the November meeting of the Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons each year should be given over entirely to the degree of Ark Mariner under the Grand Masters' Royal Ark Council.

If you have not yet taken the further step to becoming a Royal Ark Mariner, speak to someone in your Mark Lodge to find out more, or email the Provincial Grand Secretary (provgsec@warksmarkppl.co.uk), and he will arrange for a member of the team to get in touch with you and answer your questions.

Warks Mark L.O.I. Open Evening - W.Bro Ian Belsham Prov.G.Sec & Secretary to LOI

On Tuesday 16th February the LOI held an open evening, after some problems for `Brethren wanting to join the event , due to an incorrect Zoom code, the evening eventually started at 7.45pm with 40 Brethren in attendance.

W. Bro Tony Ball gave a brief history of the LOI, which was formed in the early 1900's, though he claims not to have been a member then !

The highlight of any LOI year is the Annual Festival, which has been held at a number of venues, Stirling Road until its closure Yenton, Knowle, and most recently as a breakfast meeting in Warwick. The Festival always has a guest President, often a Prov.G.M. from an adjacent Province.



In normal times the LOI meets monthly at the Knowle Masonic rooms, there is no set day, which fits in with the Lodge rooms, who generously allow use for free.

The LOI is a friendly and relaxed way to rehearse and practice ritual, four Zoom meetings have been held so far this year, encouraging Brethren to be ready for return.

The Festival is due to be held in May if conditions allow, if not it will be rescheduled later in the year - it will happen, look out for details.

The Officers of the LOI are the two Preceptors, W.Bro. Tony Ball and W.Bro Neil Murray, Treasurer W.Bro David Evans, and Secretary W.Bro Ian Belsham, with all the hard work being done by the first two.

It was stressed throughout that the LOI is for everyone, from the newest to oldest member, you may have missed an office on the way to the Chair, come to LOI and give that office a go, we are all capable of learning the words, but the meaning, and the movements around the Lodge room LOI is there to help you.

The LOI also runs an Ancient Ritual team, which has performed demonstrations both Home and abroad, well, Spain and Wales actually. Plans are being made for two new demonstrations , the making of a Mark Man, and a Mark Master.

A number of Brethren spoke about their experience of LOI and the benefit they had achieved from it, The Prov.G.D.C. volunteered a LOI session on being a DC, which will be open to all, once we can meet in safety.

The evening ended with W.Bro Tony Ball thanking all for attending, and particularly asked the more senior Brethren to encourage all to join and enjoy the fun of being a Mark Mason.

Next meeting:

The next Warwickshire Mark LOI Webinar is due to take place on Tuesday 2nd March, 7.30pm.

On this occasion W.Bro Ian Belsham Prov.G.Sec. will be talking about his Office and duties.

All Brethren have been sent an eMail with a link to receive the Zoom Invite. Please click on this to join in.

My role—by Paul Mason Provincial Grand Almoner

I accepted the role after a vacancy for the office arose, and R.W.Bro Roger Mac approached me to see I was interested. And as they say the rest is history!

I have at times found the role quite challenging, but with the great support of all of the Provincial Team, and of course from the very many excellent almoners we have in this Province, most of whom have been in office for longer than me, I hope I have fulfilled my office to your satisfaction. I try as much as possible to maintain contact with those in the Province who are unwell and of course with those whose Family members may also be poorly.

Here I must state brethren that I cannot provide help to anyone unless I know about those who are unwell.

Being an Almoner is not just sitting and waiting for something to happen in the Lodge, the core role of the Almoner is to be the “eyes and ears” of the Lodge.

- To maintain regular contact with sick or distressed Lodge members.
- To try to contact members who stop attending meetings.
- To try if possible, to keep in contact with members who have resigned from Mark or RAM
- Most importantly to maintain regular contact with the Lodge Widows.
- To try and be alert, to the needs and problems of Lodge members and their dependants.
- And finally, awareness, constantly looking out for the needs or difficulties of the brethren or their dependants either from a direct approach from a brother or from notice given by a Masonic friend. Unfortunately, the Corona virus has had a negative effect on our ability to visit those Brethren who are in hospital, and also those who may be confined to their homes for any reason, especially those who live alone.

Please try to phone these brothers regularly, and get the message out the rest of the Lodge members.

When we first went into lockdown I started phoning everyone in the Province to see how they were, and over a few weeks managed to phone almost every one. I hope my contact with you made you feel less lonely and it was nice to hear so many positive responses from you. Since then, after an excellent suggestion from our R.W. Provincial Grand Master I have established a data base with all of the Mark members of the Province and have been emailing Birthday cards as and when it is their Birthday and I hope has given you a small lift in these awful times.

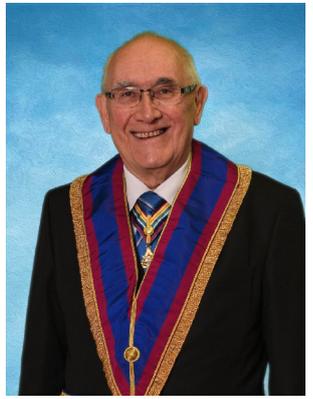
I have also sent Christmas cards, and of course New Year cards. I hope you have enjoyed them and understand that the Provincial Officers have every one of you in our hearts and thoughts.

One of the more difficult tasks as an Almoner is attending the funerals of Brethren, or members of their family who have passed to the Grand Lodge above.

As Provincial Almoner I have been very fortunate to be present when donations have been given to local hospices, at the presentations of new ambulances to the St John Ambulance and to charities at the QE Hospital. It is very rewarding to see your donations being applied to some of the most worthy charities especially those in the locality or in the Province.

Brethren, I hope this has given you a small understanding of the role of an Almoner and I thank you for all for joining us today.

May I wish you all well in these very difficult times and please brethren. Stay Safe.



The Mark Provincial Shop

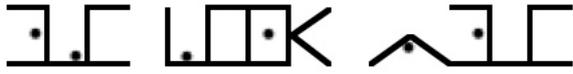
Please check out the Mark Provincial Shop on the new Warwickshire Mark website. The link is below, however you will need to log in to access the items from the shop. Items available include the ritual books, Warwickshire Mark Provincial Tie and the Warwickshire Mark token. Should you have items of regalia that you no longer need and would like to donate for sale for brethren to purchase with proceeds going to the 2027 festival please post them to James Freakley. Midland Flooring Unit 9 The Cedars Coton Road Coleshill B46 2HH.

If you have any questions about the shop or products please contact James Freakley,
provdepgsec@warksmarkpgl.co.uk

Name that rune:

A regular monthly puzzle with a quarterly prize.

The phrase below is a mix up of words. By using the masonic alphabet at the back of the Mark Ritual no1. Can you solve the puzzle.



Clue: Monopoly board property suitable for painters and decorators.

The answer will be put on the website after two weeks. If you email me the correct answer before then your name will be added to the "Name that rune" hall of fame on the website. There will be a quarterly prize draw into which all winning names will be entered. The more months you send in a correct answer in time, the better your chance of winning.

First prize draw will be in May, for a chance to win a pair of WMBF 2027 Festival cufflinks.

And now, while you have dusted off the ritual book, why not read the address to the candidate, given at the end of the Advancement ceremony. It starts "In conclusion ...", and encapsulates the ethos of the Mark perfectly. It is a piece of work that, if delivered well, makes a lasting impression on the candidate.

Email answers to: deppgm@warksmarkpgl.co.uk

Freemasonry@86

All Brethren should receive this email from Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England and Wales and its Districts and Lodges Overseas and it is worth a read as it is not just news of our headquarters it also includes contributions from many Mark Provinces and so enables us all to become aware of what is going on in all of Mark Masonry under their auspices.

But that is only the beginning as it also includes information on all of the Orders and Degrees administered from there.

Well worth a read!

Editor's Final Note

Can I please say a great big thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition of Warwickshire Mark. The next issue will hopefully be with you in late March, but that does depend upon contributions and every member of Mark and RAM is welcome to contribute.

When the concept of a Provincial Newsletter was first put forward it was never imagined it would be of this size or quality and that is down to you, so please keep the articles, and even better, pictures, coming! As Mark Masonry starts to come to life as soon as it is safe to do so, please let the editor know what you and your Lodges are doing, not just the date and time, but also what is happening—ceremonies, lecture or special events.

Please send your contributions (or any other news) to comms@warksmarkpgl.co.uk